

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Assistant Director for Reports & Estimates
Attn: Mr. [redacted]

FROM : Assistant Director for Scientific Intelligence

DATE: NOV 3 1950

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SUBJECT: Scientific and Technical Aspects Affecting Soviet Courses of Action in Germany through 1951

1. In accordance with verbal request and agreements reached at a meeting with representatives of ORE, information on the subject is submitted as follows:

a. In the over-all consideration of the problem as presented in the suggested outline Soviet dependence upon Eastern Germany and Czechoslovakian uranium mines for their atomic energy project must be given considerable weight.

b. An indication of the importance which the USSR places upon these operations can be derived from the latest estimates on the subject:

(1) Of the total uranium mined to date by the USSR, it is estimated that from 60% to 75% has been obtained from mines in Saxony, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia. Of this total from 50% to 60% has been obtained from Saxony and 10% to 15% from Czechoslovakia. The cost of the mining operations is estimated at around 1.5 billion East Marks (or about \$90,000,000) per year. Approximately 175,000 to 200,000 people are involved in the operation. While the most of the cost is charged to the East German economy, the cost of uranium is roughly 15 to 20 times the current cost of uranium to the United States. This, in itself, is some measure of its importance.

c. It is our opinion that the USSR will not make any political or military moves which will involve a risk to this mining operation until such time as these areas are greatly depleted and alternate mines can be developed and in operation within the USSR. However, it is unlikely that war involving the USSR in Western Europe would prevent or even substantially affect the continual production and shipment of uranium from Germany and Czechoslovakia.

d. In the spring of 1950, the USSR started to develop two alternate mining areas in Siberia. These are believed to have an eventual production potential of about the same as that of the German and Czech mines. At some future date, the USSR will undoubtedly cease mining operations in Germany and Czechoslovakia, and shift to full dependence on the internal source of supply. Based upon our knowledge of the problems involved and the methods employed by the Soviets, this shift might begin to occur as early as the latter part of 1951, although this is not too likely.

Case Review for Review Action

IN SUMMARY: A factor of considerable importance bearing on possible Soviet political or military action in Germany during 1951 is the great Soviet dependence upon Eastern Germany and Czechoslovakian mining operations for uranium ore. There will be a decrease in the importance of this factor at some time in the future as mines now under development in Siberia come into operation and as German and Czechoslovakian mines are depleted. A precise date for this decrease cannot be set, but it may occur as early as the latter part of 1951, although this is not too likely. It is believed that war involving the USSR in Western Europe would not seriously interfere with the production and shipment to the USSR of uranium ore from Germany and Czechoslovakia.

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